

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 01787 110711Z

16-11

ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6377

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1787

FOR NEA REGIONAL LABOR ADVISOR SEARING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, BG

SUBJECT: AAFLI IN BANGLADESH

1. IN A SEPTEL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING (DACCA 1788) YOU WILL RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM RICHARD OULAHAN TO PASS TO MORRIS PALADINO OF AAFLI. IN IT, OULAHAN SAYS HE IS LEAVING BANGLADESH APRIL 15 "ON REQUEST OF" BDG. SINCE OULAHAN UNWILLING TO EXPLAIN SITUATION MORE FULLY TO PALADINO RIGHT NOW, WE WISH TO PROVIDE FOR YOUR INFORMATION THE BACKGROUND, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.

2. OULAHAN, AAFLI'S REP IN DACCA, CAME TO EMBASSY LATE AFTERNOON APRIL 10 AND WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION WHICH HAS PROMPTED HIS DEPARTURE. HOWEVER, AFTER SOME PRODDING, HE SAID THAT THE REQUEST, OR SUGGESTION, THAT HE TAKE A BRIEF VACATION CAME FROM THE DIRECTOR OF NSI (NATIONAL SECURITY INTELLIGENCE) ON ORDERS FROM SOMEONE ELSE WHOM HE DID NOT IDENTIFY. THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT THERE WAS NO PROBLEM WITH AAFLI FROM NSI'S POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN LABOR AT PRESENT, PERHAPS AAFLI OUGHT TO PULL BACK ON ITS OPERATIONS FOR THE PRESENT AND OULAHAN TAKE A VACATION. THE NSI DIRECTOR SUGGESTED THAT OULAHAN MIGHT DISCUSS THE SITUATION WITH "THE PEOPLE HE WORKS WITH" (READ: THE JATIYO SRAMIK LEAGUE) TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE NSI DIRECTOR MADE NO REFERENCE TO CLOSING DOWN AAFLI'S PROGRAM HERE.

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3. OULAHAN RETURNED TO THE EMBASSY THIS MORNING,

APRIL 11. ACCORDING TO HIS SOURCES, A COMPLAINT WAS MADE THAT (A) AAFLI HAS BEEN FOMENTING DIVISION WITHIN THE JSL; AND (B) IT HAS BEEN ADVOCATING MULTITRADE UNIONISM, IN OPPOSITION TO THE "SECOND REVOLUTION" OF PRESIDENT MUJIBUR RAHMAN WHO PLANS A SINGLE LABOR FRONT. OULAHAN SPECULATES THAT THE REQUEST TO LEAVE WAS ACTUALLY THE RESULT OF RIVALRY WITHIN THE JSL, PARTICULARLY INTENSE NOW WITH JOCKEYING FOR POSITION IN THE LABOR FRONT, AND THE DISGRUNTLEMENT OF SOME LABOR LEADERS WHO HAVE NOT HAD AAFLI ASSISTANCE.

4. OULAHAN HOPES TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION FROM JSL PRESIDENT RAHMAN WHO RETURNS TO DACCA TODAY. HE ALSO WANTS RAHMAN TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH SHEIKH FAZUL HUQ MONI, MUJIB'S NEPHEW WHO RUMORS CONTEND WILL BECOME HEAD OF THE LABOR FRONT. IN ADDITION, OULAHAN HAS A PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT THIS MORNING WITH MINISTRY OF LABOR SECRETARY ZAMAN WITH WHOM HE WILL RAISE THE ISSUE.

5. OULAHAN IS ANXIOUS TO AT LEAST DELAY HIS DEPARTURE. HE ASKED IF IT WAS POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR THE AMBASSADOR TO SEE MUJIB ON THE MATTER. WE TOLD HIM THAT HIS BEST BET WAS TO WORK THROUGH THE JSL AND SHEIKH MONI, AS WELL AS THE LABOR MINISTRY, TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION. OULAHAN WILL KEEP US INFORMED. MEANWHILE, WE ARE MAKING INFORMAL INQUIRY OF HOME MINISTRY.
BOSTER

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